

Robert Stevens Ship Chandlery
Bowen's Wharf
Newport
Newport County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-304

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS RI-304

ROBERT STEVENS' WHARF - SHIP CHANDLERY
(Cowley's - Bowen's Wharf Bldg. 2)

Location: Northwest corner of Bowen's Wharf.

Present Use: Fuel company use.

Significance: This is a typical shop and warehouse building on one of the large, fully developed wharfs characteristic of Newport's 18th century waterfront.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 18th century.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Not known.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a shop and warehouse building on one of the wharfs characteristic of Newport's 18th century waterfront.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition, and is currently being used as a fuel company office. Interior partitions are apparently later than the original construction. The interior was probably undivided, originally.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Rectangular, 36'6" x 24'5". Two stories.
2. Foundations: Random field stone foundations.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Heavy timber frame and studs covered with horizontal sheathing boards, 1" thick, random widths, covered with shingles 6" to the weather.
4. Structural system: Heavy timber frame structural system on very large structural bays. Six principal posts, 7" x 7", widely spaced 18' x 24' structural bays. Intermediate studs average 3-3/4" x 4" spaced 30" on centers. Second floor beams span 24' framing into girts, averages 7-1/2" x 7" spaced 54" on centers.
5. Chimneys: One brick chimney within south wall.

5. Openings:

- a. Doors and doorways: Two doorways, in north wall and east wall. Doorways have splayed wooden lintels, later doors. North doorway has heavy batten shutter.
- b. Windows: Double hung windows. 8" x 10" panes of glass. Original windows on first floor, six-light-over-nine-light sash. Heavy batten shutters with iron locking bars that secure on the inside.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Gable roof. Square asbestos shingles laid in a diagonal pattern.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Simple boxed eaves.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The original plan apparently was without interior partitions. It is now divided into entrance hall, office, and workshop on the first floor; a hallway, office and storeroom are on the second floor.
2. Stairways: One stairway, straight run, along east wall. Rail along stairwell at second floor with turned balusters.
3. Flooring: Mostly later wooden or asphalt flooring. Some original wooden flooring on second floor in storage room, 1" thick, random widths 11' to 20".
4. Wall and ceiling finish: None original or later.
5. Windlass: A windlass is built-in in the attic space for hoisting loads through a trap door to the second floor. The windlass is made of wood, and fitted to wooden members attached to the trussed roof structure. An 8' 2" wheel is used to turn a 1' drum around which the hoisting rope is wound, giving approximately a 1 to 8 mechanical advantage. A large rope pulley which fitted the larger turning wheel was used for operating the windlass.
6. Notable hardware: The batten shutters have interesting hardware, including large simple strap hinges riding on pintles, and iron locking bars which go across the exterior of the shutters when they are closed hinged at one end and fastened at the other end by a bolt that is secured from the inside.

- D. Site: Orientation (by compass reading) and general setting. The long side of the building faces north onto the Wharf.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Newport HABS Project — 1969. Sponsored in cooperation with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Antoinette F. Downing, Chairman. Under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Osmund Overby (University of Missouri), Project Supervisor Jack E. Boucher, photographer.

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National Park Service,
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